

THE BEGINNINGS OF PRINTING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

By DOUGLAS C. McMURTRIE



NEW HAMPSHIRE was the fourth of the British colonies in the New England group to obtain the benefits of the printing press. In the summer of 1756 a number of prominent residents of the colony extended to Daniel Fowle, of Boston, an invitation to move to Portsmouth and there set up his press. Fowle accepted this invitation and, on 7 October 1756, printed at Portsmouth, in his newly established office, the first issue of the *New-Hampshire Gazette*.

New Hampshire's first printer came to the province with an already established reputation as a champion of liberty of press and person against the arbitrary impositions of government. The high-handed treatment he endured at the hands of the governing powers in connexion with the printing at Boston of a pamphlet entitled *The Monster of Monsters* was a decisive factor in his determination to leave Massachusetts. In beginning his career at Portsmouth, however, he did not know that he was to achieve, many generations later, the distinction of having established the oldest newspaper still published currently in the United States.

Fowle moved to Portsmouth in July 1756, set up his press in August, and began his *Gazette* early in October. In the first issue of his newspaper he thus addressed the public:

Upon the Encouragement given by a Number of Subscribers agreeable to printed Proposals, I now publish the first Weekly Gazette, for the Province of New-Hampshire; depending upon the Favour of all Gentlemen who are Friends to Learning, Religion and Liberty to countenance my Undertaking, as this is the

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beginning of Printing in this Province, so that I may go on cheerfully, and continue this Paper in a useful and entertaining Manner . . .¹

Aside from the *Gazette*, Fowle's first New Hampshire printing was *An Astronomical Diary: or, an Almanack for the Year of our Lord Christ, 1757*, by Nathaniel Ames. This was published at 'Portsmouth in New Hampshire, Printed and Sold by Daniel Fowle'. On the fifteenth page of some copies of this interesting little book the printer inserted a brief but specific record of the first months of printing in New Hampshire: 'The first Printing Press set up in Portsmouth New Hampshire, was in August 1756; the *Gazette* publish'd the 7th of October; and this Almanack November following.'²

At the time this almanac was issued (it was advertised in the *Gazette* of 2 December 1756, as 'just printed'), two other pieces of printing were in progress in Fowle's new establishment. The first of these was *Good News from a Far Country: in seven discourses . . . By Jonathan Parsons, A.M.*, published with the imprint 'Portsmouth, in New Hampshire: Printed and Sold by Daniel Fowle, 1756'. The other was *The Excellency of the Word of God*, which was 'a Sermon Delivered at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. Samuel McClintock . . . Nov. 3, 1756. By Samuel Langdon, A.M.' and published with the same imprint as on the Parsons book. Whether either of

¹ Frank W. Miller, 'The New-Hampshire Gazette', *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 26, 1872, pp. 132-40, presents in this article a facsimile from this first issue.

² The Library of Congress and the New Hampshire Historical Society each has a copy of this rare almanac with this note printed within ornamental rules and set lengthwise in the right margin on the page. The American Antiquarian Society's copy lacks this note and is evidently an earlier printing, the note having been an afterthought. See the note by Charles L. Nichols in the Society's *Proceedings*, vol. 25, 1915, pp. 327 ff. It will be noted that neither in his address to the public in the first issue of the *Gazette*, nor in this note in the almanac, does Daniel Fowle attribute priority to the 'printed Proposals' issued in advance of the *Gazette*. It seems likely that these proposals were the first output of the New Hampshire press.

AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY :
OR, AN
ALMANACK
For the Year of our Lord CHRIST,

I 7 5 7.

Being the first Year after BISSEXTILE or LEAP-YEAR.

In the 30th Year of the Reign of King GEORGE II.

Wherein are contained the Lunations, Eclipses of the Luminaries, Aspects, Courts, Spring-Tides, Judgment of the Weather, Sun and Moon's Rising and Sitting, Time of High Water, &c.

Calculated for the Meridian of Boston in N. E. Lat. 42 Deg. 25 Min. North.

By **NATHANIEL AMES.**

MINORCA's gone ! OSWEGO too is lost !
Review the Cause ; or BRITAIN pays the Cost :
These sad Events have silenced my Muse,
The Prince of Day * eclipses at the News,
And Comet † soon will blaze along the Skie,
Portending (sure) some dire Event is nigh ;
I dare not speak ! May Shame and Blushes tell,
What we've not done, and what hath us befell !

* See the Eclipse in the next Page. † The N. B.

PORTSMOUTH in NEW HAMPSHIRE, Printed, and Sold
by Daniel Fowle.

1. The first book printed in New Hampshire.

GOOD NEWS
From a Far Country.
IN SEVEN
DISCOURSES

From 1-TIM. I. 15.

Delivered at the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
in *Newbury* :

And now published at the Desire of many of
the *Hearers* and *Others*..

By **JONATHAN PARSONS, A. M.**

And Minister of the Gospel *there*.

1 Cor. ii. 2. *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Christ : Nevertheless, I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself, for me.*

Rom. v. 8. *But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Luke xix. 10. *For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.*

PORTSMOUTH, in NEW-HAMPSHIRE :

Printed and Sold by *Daniel Fowle.* 1756.

2. The second book printed in New Hampshire.

them actually appeared before the close of 1756 (in spite of the date in the imprints) is somewhat uncertain, although work was well advanced on the Parsons book even before the Langdon sermon was preached. The *New-Hampshire Gazette* of 4 November 1756, contained the following notice: 'Good News from a far Country: in seven discourses by Rev Jonathan Parsons is soon to be published. Five of the sermons have already been set up and lack of paper prevents completion until a supply of paper arrives from London which is probable at an early date.' If the paper arrived, both works may have been off the press by December of 1756, but it happens that neither is again mentioned in the *Gazette* until April 1757. The almanac for 1757 was printed on the paper which was also used for the *Gazette* and was not delayed for the arrival of supplies from London.¹

Another of Fowle's early books was *Popish Cruelty Display'd: Being a full and true Account of the Massacre of the Protestants in Ireland, By the Instigation of the Blood-thirsty Jesuits, Priests, Fryars, &c.* This work bore the imprint 'Portsmouth in New Hampshire; Printed by Daniel Fowle, 1757'. The date of its appearance is fixed quite exactly by its advertisement, under the heading 'Tomorrow will be sold', in the *Gazette* of 11 March 1757. A later imprint of the same year was the Ames almanac for 1758, advertised ('Now in the press and in about ten days will be published') in the *Gazette* of 2 December 1757.²

Fowle devoted most of his time to his newspaper, although

¹ The question of priority among the earliest New Hampshire imprints is discussed in detail in the note by Charles L. Nichols, just cited.

² Charles L. Nichols, 'Checklist of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont Almanacs', *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, vol. 38, 1928, p. 84. The New Hampshire Historical Society has a copy of the Ames almanac for 1758. Another almanac for 1758, issued at 'Portsmouth, in New-Hampshire: Printed and Sold by Daniel Fowle', is shown by its preface not to be an Ames almanac.

he also did the official printing of the province.¹ On 7 September of 1764, he was joined in the publication of the *Gazette* by his nephew, Robert L. Fowle, who continued with him until 1773. But for the most part Fowle was 'assisted by his negro slave, Primus, an excellent pressman, although he did not know a letter, and who lived to the age of ninety', after more than fifty years of work at printing.²

Having had one unpleasant experience in the Boston jail, Daniel Fowle seems to have made it a point to be circumspect in his printed utterances in the *New-Hampshire Gazette*, even under provocation.³ For twenty years he avoided trouble, but disturbances in Portsmouth in the fall of 1775 seem to have caused him some difficulty. In the *Gazette* of 2 November 1775 appeared the following:

The Printing Press is removed to Greenland, about Six Miles from Portsmouth, at the House of Mr. Samuel Pickering's, near Mr. Folsom's Tavern—where any Persons may be supplied with this Paper, that the Course of Intelligence may not be wholly stopped, & the Public deprived of that invaluable Privilege, we are constitutionally contending for.

The same issue noted that 'It was with great Difficulty a News Paper was published this Week, amidst the general Confusion in Portsmouth'. And on 8 November the publisher appealed to 'his good Customers to pay off what they

¹ George Henry Moore gives an interesting account of the first printed New Hampshire laws, published by B. Green and J. Allen at Boston in 1699.

² Miller, op. cit., pp. 133, 136.

³ With the Stamp Act about to go into effect, Fowle announced the impending suspension of the *Gazette* in an issue at the end of October 1765, printed with a heavy black border as an emblem of mourning for the loss of liberty. The paper continued, however, without stamps and without interference from the authorities, for the good reason that there was no stamp master at Portsmouth (Jacob B. Moore, 'History of Newspapers Published in New Hampshire from 1776 to 1840', *American Quarterly Register*, vol. 13, November 1840, pp. 170-81, at p. 179). For notes on the removal of the press to Greenland, and for numerous other suggestions on the details of this article, I am indebted to Mr. Otis G. Hammond, Director of the New Hampshire Historical Society at Concord.

'may be in Arrears for this Paper, at the Printing Office in Greenland, near Mr. Folsom's Tavern, where he has fled for Refuge. Those who can't pay in Money, are desired to send Wood, Meal, Pork, Lamb, Mutton, Butter, Cheese, or almost anything they please, in this distressing Time'.

Incidentally, it must be noted that though the stay of the press at Greenland was brief, it makes it necessary to recognize that hamlet as the second point at which printing was done in New Hampshire.

A more serious difficulty arose early in 1776, when Daniel Fowle permitted the publication of a communication reflecting on the Revolutionary general assembly, then sitting at Exeter. And the assembly on 17 January 1776 promptly took action:

Upon reading an Ignominious Scurrilous & Scandalous Piece Printed in the New Hampshire Gazette & Historical Chronicle N^o 1001, of Tuesday Jan^y 9th 1776—Directed or Addressed to the Congress at Exeter—Voted That Daniel Fowle Esq^r the Supposed Printer of Said Paper be forthwith Sent for and ordered to Appear before this house and give an account of the Author of Said Piece, and further to answer for his Printing Said piece So much Derogatory to the Honour of this Assembly, as well as of the Hon^{ble} Continental Congress and Injurious to the Cause of Liberty now Contending for.¹

The journal of the house of representatives does not record Fowle's appearance before it, but it may be assumed that he did appear before the outraged assembly at the earliest opportunity and made the best explanation he could. The matter was dropped, and the offending editor escaped another jail sentence. But it may be significant that no newspaper appeared at Portsmouth for more than four months after Fowle's offence, and that when publication was at length resumed, it was not in Daniel Fowle's name.

For on 25 May 1776 Benjamin Dearborn, who had been an apprentice under Daniel Fowle, began to print at Portsmouth a newspaper entitled the *Freeman's Journal, or New-Hampshire*

¹ Journal of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, 17 January 1776.

Gazette. On the last day of December 1776 Dearborn transferred this paper to Daniel Fowle, but not for another year and a half did the old editor issue it with his imprint. On 16 June 1778, Fowle changed the title to *New-Hampshire Gazette, or State Journal, and General Advertiser*. After two years more of confusion in its volume numbering and with issues printed at times for both Portsmouth and Exeter, the old *Gazette* finally got back on to an even keel again in May 1780 with the serial numbering continuous from the first issue in 1756.

Daniel Fowle retained ownership of the *New-Hampshire Gazette* until his death, but from 24 December 1784 it was printed for him by John Melcher and George J. Osborne, Jr., for a year and then by Melcher alone. After thirty-one years of work in New Hampshire, Fowle died on 8 June 1787 at the age of 72. 'He was a correct printer and industrious. He was mild in his disposition, agreeable in his manners, liberal in his sentiments, and attached to the cause of his country.'¹

As to Daniel Fowle's attachment to the cause of his country, there were some differences of opinion in the years before the Revolution. As early as 1764, some of the more zealous patriots of Portsmouth, declaring that Fowle's *Gazette* was too much inclined toward Toryism and not sufficiently active in the cause of liberty, promoted the establishment of a competing newspaper. Thomas Furber, a native son of Portsmouth, who had been an apprentice in the Fowle establishment, was persuaded to make the venture, and on 21 January 1765 began the publication of the Portsmouth *Mercury*. After two months or so, Furber took into partnership Ezekiel Russell, a youth of about twenty-one, fresh from his apprenticeship under his brother, Joseph Russell, and already known as a printer at Providence and later at Boston and Salem.

The *Mercury* was not a great success, either as a patriot organ

¹ Isaiah Thomas, *History of Printing in America*, 2nd ed., 1874, vol. 1, p. 206.

or otherwise, and it gave up the ghost toward the end of 1766.¹ The press and types were bought by the Fowles (Daniel and his nephew Robert, who were then in partnership), and Furber became their journeyman.² Russell next appeared as a printer as John Waterman's partner at Olneyville, near Providence, in 1768.

Daniel Fowle was enough of a patriot to put his paper into mourning as a protest against the Stamp Act in 1765, and it was a difference in political views that caused the dissolution of the partnership with Robert L. Fowle, his nephew, about April 1733. The younger man, son of John Fowle who had been a silent partner in the firm of Rogers & Fowle at Boston, had learned printing in his uncle's Portsmouth office. When the split came, Robert took the equipment which had been used by Furber and went to Exeter. There he is said to have done 'some work for the old government, and, in 1775, some for 'the new'.³

Thus we are left a little uncertain as to the exact date that the press was established at Exeter, the third printing point

¹ The last issue located, according to Clarence S. Brigham, 'Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820. Part V: . . . New Hampshire', *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, vol. 26, 1916, pp. 96-184, at p. 149, is that of 29 September 1766. Thomas evidently was not well informed about this newspaper, for in one place (vol. 1, p. 206) he said that it ended 'in less than a year', but in another connexion (vol. 2, p. 96) said that it was discontinued 'after having been published about three years'.

² 'Furber had been taught plain binding and undertook to connect it with 'printing. Although he was not very skilful, either as a printer or as a binder, he 'began the world under favorable circumstances; and, had he been attentive 'to his affairs, he might have been successful. He was good natured and friendly, 'but naturally indolent; and, like too many others, gave himself up to the enjoyment of a companion, when he should have been attending to his business. He 'died in Baltimore, at the house of William Goddard, who had employed him for 'a long time and shown him much friendship' (Thomas, loc. cit.).

³ Thomas, loc. cit. According to Thomas, Robert Fowle 'was neither a skillful nor a correct printer'.

in the state. But on 22 May 1776 Robert Fowle began the publication at Exeter of a newspaper which he called *New-Hampshire Gazette, or The Exeter Morning Chronicle*. It will be recalled that at that date the elder Fowle's *New-Hampshire Gazette* at Portsmouth was in a state of suspended animation following its editor's difficulty with the Revolutionary government of New Hampshire. It was also almost exactly at that date that Benjamin Dearborn's *Freeman's Journal, or New-Hampshire Gazette* began at Portsmouth. The last located issue of Robert Fowle's Exeter paper is that dated 15 July 1777, in which the announcement is made that the paper would be published in the future by Daniel Fowle, 'who proposes to 'keep the Office open at Exeter, as also at Portsmouth, in case 'proper Encouragement is given'.¹

Shortly after giving up his paper, Robert Fowle fled from Exeter under suspicion of Tory activities. In the course of his printing activities he had printed the paper currency issued by the state of New Hampshire. This money was counterfeited, and suspicion of complicity in this criminal act rested on the printer. He confirmed this suspicion by taking refuge within the British lines at New York, where he was put on the British pension list. Thereafter he was never again concerned with printing. After the war he returned to Exeter, married the widow of a younger brother who had succeeded him at that place, and continued to live in New Hampshire until his death.²

Until after the Revolution, New Hampshire printing, with brief exceptions, was confined to Portsmouth and Exeter. Other printers appeared at both these places during the troubled years of war. To Exeter, in February 1778, came Zechariah Fowle, Daniel's brother and former apprentice. Zechariah's

¹ Brigham, vol. 26, p. 126; and see pp. 150-1 for the later confusion of Portsmouth and Exeter issues of the *Gazette*.

² Thomas, op. cit., p. 207.

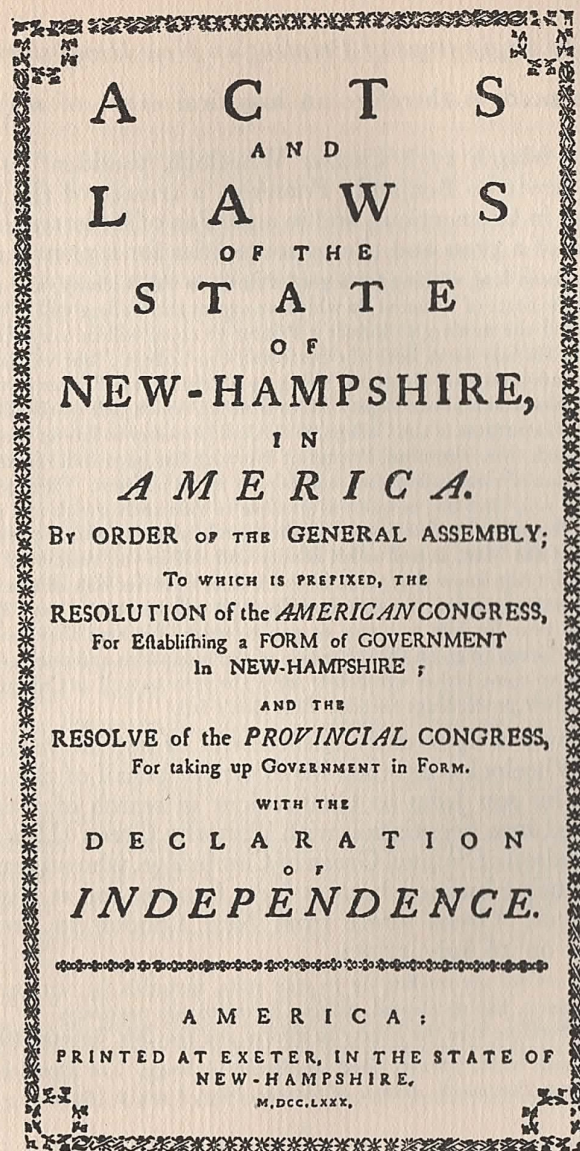
career as a printer in Massachusetts included a part in printing the pamphlet *The Monster of Monsters*, for which Daniel Fowle had been imprisoned.¹ After retiring from the *Massachusetts Spy* in 1770, he had conducted a bookstore at Boston. On coming to Exeter, he there established the *Exeter Journal*, or, *New Hampshire Gazette* on 17 February 1778. In June, this became the *New-Hampshire Gazette*, or, *State Journal*, and *General Advertiser*—the same title adopted by Daniel Fowle for his Portsmouth paper when he once emerged from anonymity as a publisher in the same month.² After reverting early in 1779 to the earlier title of *Exeter Journal*, this paper ceased in March of that year. Zechariah Fowle's most important production was the 1780 edition of the *Acts and Laws of the State of New Hampshire*, in 236 pages, followed by supplementary pages in following years.

Other than its short sojourn at Greenland, the one brief appearance of a press in New Hampshire out side of Portsmouth and Exeter during the Revolutionary years was at Dresden,³ near the site of Dartmouth College. Officially, the establishment of this press was an enterprise of the newly created state of Vermont, as sixteen New Hampshire towns near the border, including Dresden, had declared themselves a part of Vermont in June 1778. Dartmouth College keenly felt the need of a press nearer than Portsmouth or Exeter, and Vermont also wanted an official press. The coming of the press in response

¹ It seems strange that Isaiah Thomas, once Zechariah Fowle's apprentice and a member of his household, and later his partner, makes no mention of Zechariah's venture into New Hampshire.

² It seems quite likely that Daniel Fowle was the power behind both his nephew Robert and his brother Zechariah and that the various New Hampshire Gazettes were aspects of the same publishing enterprise. Beginning in October 1778, the *Gazette* at Portsmouth carried the same volume numbering as that begun by Zechariah Fowle for the *Exeter Journal*. See Brigham, vol. 26, p. 151.

³ Since 1784, Dresden has been included under the name of the town of Hanover.



3. Fowle's most important publication at Exeter, New Hampshire (*Reduced*).

to those needs is therefore an historical event of major importance.

On 30 March 1778 Eleazar Wheelock, president of Dartmouth, wrote to Benjamin Pomeroy, a trustee of the college who lived in Connecticut, and in a portion of his letter set forth the need of a press and the opportunities for a printer :

We have been long wishing for a good Printer in this Vicinity, and since the forming of the State of Vermont, in which we expect this College will be included, we apprehend the motives to induce a Printer to come will be very strong and inviting—as He may serve both the State and the College ; but we have lately heard that endeavours are vigorously rising, to obtain a State Printer on the other side of the Mountains about Eighty Miles from us, which will wholly defeat the desire as well as purpose of the College, as we shall be nearer to Exeter than to that place proposed. Mr. Trumbull Printer at Norwich has been well recommended to us, as a Man of virtues, learning, and fidelity in his business. These are therefore to pray you, kind Sir, as quick as possible to ride to Norwich and see what you can do for us having due respect to the moral, religious, and literary accomplishments of the Man, as well as his fidelity and skill in the business of his profession, and let him know that there is now a door open for him in this vicinity, if he will come or engage to come speedily, and will be open til you have had a reasonable time for him to come, or you to send. We hear they have wrote a young Mr. Green to go on the other side of the mountains and one's coming or determining to come hither will better serve the state as well as College and no doubt stop their proceedings therein. Pray don't fail.¹

Pomeroy was apparently unsuccessful or not interested, but Eleazar Wheelock continued his efforts in behalf of the college and sent his son John to Connecticut in search of a printer. He entered into negotiation with Timothy Green III, a great-grandson of Samuel Green of Cambridge, who was engaged in the printing business both at New London and at Norwich, Connecticut. Green wrote from New London to President Wheelock on 16 July 1778 :

The time set for my sending up to your state, materials for carrying on the printing business, having elapsed, makes a letter to you necessary.

I would therefore take the liberty to inform you that Mr. Spooner (the elder

¹ Dartmouth MSS. 778230, cited by Harold G. Rugg, 'The Dresden Press', reprinted from *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, May, 1920, p. [3].

brother) [Judah Padock Spooner] whom I chiefly depended on to conduct the business, has been concerned in privateering for several weeks (having been engaged previous to my engagement to you), and could not disengage himself till about ten days ago, but is now at liberty and both ready and willing to undertake in the business.

The last week went to Norwich with a view of putting up the materials and was informed that one of the oxen which was to go in your cart, is lame, and unable to perform the service, and that the cart is tho't to be unfit to transport so heavy materials.

Mr. Spooner is now out of business on this account, but hope it will not be long before the team is ready, whenever it is, he will be ready to proceed with the materials.

He bo't a horse the last week, with a view of setting out directly for Hanover, in order to consult with yourself on the matter of setting up his business, and to be informed whether any paper had been procured ; but on further consideration it was tho't best to defer it till the materials were on their way to Hanover ; but the ox being lame has prevented the prosecution of that plan.

I hope you will do him every reasonable service, as to furnishing him with stock to begin with as well as with work ; and wish he may serve the public with faithfulness, and with credit to himself.

Am sorry I can't spare a larger quantity of types than I shall send with him ; but expect ere long to be able to do it.¹

At the session of the Vermont legislature held in October 1778, it was 'voted and resolved, that Judah Paddock [*sic*] 'and Alden Spooner be, and are hereby, appointed printers for 'the General Assembly of the State'.²

It is a matter of some question whether both the Spooners were in Vermont at the time that the printing office, operated in the names of Judah Padock and Alden Spooner, began work at Dresden in the fall of 1778. Alden seems certainly to have been there, but it is supposed that Judah Padock was not present, possibly as a result of the prison illness he contracted while incarcerated for his privateering activities.³

¹ Dartmouth MSS. 778416, cited by Rugg, op. cit., p. [4].

² Rugg, op. cit., citing Slade, *Vermont State Papers*, p. 178. See also Henry S. Wardner, 'Alden Spooner, State Printer', *The Vermonter*, vol. 36, no. 1, January 1931, pp. 15-22.

³ Alden Spooner's name occurs alone in most of the contemporary records. A

There is extant a bill from the shop of the Spooner brothers to the state of Vermont for official printing done from October 1778 to June 1799.¹ From it we learn that the earliest official work was the printing of 250 blank commissions, dated on the bill as 5 October 1778. The charge for this work was £10. Undoubtedly the next product of the Spooner press was a Vermont thanksgiving proclamation issued by Governor Chittenden in 1778. This was a broadside, without indication of place or printer; it is considered the earliest extant printed Vermont document. An election sermon by Eden Burroughs was the third publication. It was entitled *A Sincere Regard to Righteousness and Piety, the sole Measure of a true Principle of Honor and Patriotism. Illustrated in a Sermon Preached before his Excellency the Governor, the honorable Council, and House of Representatives in the State of Vermont, October 8th, A.D. 1778*, by Eden Burroughs, A.M., pastor of the church in Hanover. This is the earliest Dresden publication to carry the printers' names and the only one to refer to Dresden as in Vermont. Its imprint reads: 'Dresden State of Vermont. Printed by J. P. & A. Spooner.' Three hundred copies of this sermon were ordered printed, according to the Spooners' bill for printing. The charge for the printing was £50, which was placed on the bill under 27 October 1778.

In November 1778 one hundred handbills were printed for the state, and two hundred copies of the journals of the assembly. Early in 1779, two hundred notes were printed, and 10 February 1779 a charge of £105 was made for 450 copies

lot of land in Dresden was given Alden Spooner, printer; and Alden Spooner alone is credited with bringing the press to Dresden from Norwich, according to his son, Wyman Spooner, in the *Windsor Vermont Journal* for 26 May 1826. Judah Padock Spooner was wounded at Bunker Hill, later engaged in privateering, was captured, and imprisoned in the Old Jersey. He was sent home broken in health.

¹ Quoted in full by Rugg, op. cit., pp. [5]–[6]. The total bill for work done from October to June amounted to £2,258 3s. 11d. The original bill is in the office of the Vermont state treasurer in Montpelier (Wardner, p. 15).

of *A Vindication of the conduct of the General Assembly of the State of Vermont held at Windsor on October, 1778, against Allegations and Remarks of the Protesting Members; with Observations on their Proceedings at a Convention held at Cornish, on the 9th day of December, 1778*. It was written by Ira Allen and published at 'Dresden. Printed by Alden Spooner.' Also on 10 February 1779 there was a charge of £9 for printing thirty copies of *A Public Defence of the right of the New Hampshire Grants (so called) on both Sides Connecticut-River, to associate together, and form themselves into an Independent State*, carrying the imprint: 'Dresden: Printed by Alden Spooner. 1779.'

A claim to priority among Dresden imprints has been made¹ in behalf of a 41-page sermon, *A well-tempered Self-Love a Rule of Conduct towards others*, preached by Aaron Hutchinson, of Pomfret, at Windsor on 2 July 1777, 'before the Representatives of the Towns in the Counties of Charlotte, Cumberland, and Gloucester, for forming the State of Vermont'. This has the undated imprint 'Dresden: Printed by Judah-Padock & Alden Spooner'. A letter from the author, transmitting a copy of the sermon in response to a request from the convention, is dated 6 September 1777, and it is argued that the convention would have seen to the printing of this work at the earliest possible opportunity to put it into the hands of a Vermont printer. As a matter of fact, however, the Spooners' bill shows that the charge of £22 for printing 350 'convention sermons' was not made until 4 March 1779.

Probably this was the last official printing done for Vermont while Dresden was considered a part of that state, for the union of the New Hampshire towns with Vermont was dissolved 12 February 1779, and they again came under New Hampshire jurisdiction. The Spooner press remained active at Dresden

¹ Rush C. Hawkins, 'The Daye Press and the Hutchinson Sermon', *The Literary Collector*, vol. 7, no. 2, December 1903, pp. 33–9; 'The Daye Press', *idem*, vol. 7, no. 5, March 1904, pp. 35–8, 136–9.

until late in October 1779, continuing to do the Vermont state printing there even though the town was no longer within Vermont limits. From May to August 1779, the Spooners published the *Dresden Mercury and the Universal Intelligencer*, but that paper was purely a New Hampshire publication.¹

¹ An unusual glimpse of the town of Dresden, of the Spooner press, and of the establishment of the *Dresden Mercury* is given in a manuscript journal of Sergeant-Major John Hawkins, quoted by Rugg, op. cit., pp. 10 and 11. The manuscript itself is in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Hawkins wrote:

'1779, April 28. About four o'clock at Dresden, a handsome little village that deserves particular notice. At this town I found our regiment dispersed in different houses of the town.

'In this town is that seminary of learning called Dartmouth College (named after Lord Dartmouth) where Indians are educated. The founder and late president of it, Rev. Eleazer Wheelock, D.D. died the 24th. Besides the College there is another house called the Hall or Church and as I am informed answers for both. A little in the rear of this and the College stands a very elegant dwelling house of the late President, in which his family resides. There are several other dwelling houses not much inferior, and I understand many more would have been built had not the inhabitants this way, some time ago, labored under the dreadful apprehension of being driven from their peaceful abodes by the savages. The oldest house here I was informed was built not more than nine or ten years ago, and not one built within the last three years. Several thousand acres of land round the town belong to the College, some of which, if not all, is rented out.

'Besides all this, I was greatly surprised, though much pleased, to find a printing-office established in this part of the world. This vehicle of learning, this liberty of liberties, is in the south end of the College; it is a small though neat printing office, and where a vast deal of printing work is performed. While I was in the printing office I observed a printed proclamation posted up in full view, from the Governor of Vermont, ordering the approaching General Fast Day to be observed and kept. In perusing the Proclamation I found that the Governor and Council of this new State resided at Bennington. The printers at Dresden had in their hands and which they were printing "The laws and the Fees of Officers in the Civil Department of the State of Vermont". I likewise saw there, proposals for printing a newspaper in that town.'

On 6 May, at Piermont, Hawkins noted:

'This day I had the perusal of the 1st No. of the *Dresden Mercury*, dated May 4th.'

The earliest general catalogue of Dartmouth College was printed in 1779. What is said to have been the earliest purely English grammar written and published in America, Abel Curtis's *A Compend of English Grammar*, was issued by 'J. P. & A. Spooner. Dresden 1779.'¹

The identity of the press used by the Spooners at Dresden has been the subject of interesting speculation. More than a hundred years ago there was already a well-grown tradition to the effect that it was the original press used by Stephen Day at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1639. The Day press became the property of Samuel Green in 1649 and is said to have passed to a succession of Green's descendants.² In the *Windsor (Vermont) Journal* of 22 May 1826, Wyman Spooner, son of Alden Spooner, relates that the press, 'the first set up in New England, was purchased of the descendants and successors in business of Mr. Green by Alden Spooner, Esq., in 1772, and by him set up in Norwich, Connecticut'.³ According to this account, the press went with Alden Spooner to Hanover [Dresden], New Hampshire, in 1778, and to Windsor in 1783. At Windsor it remained in the elder Spooner's possession until 1814, when it was sold to Isaac Eddy and again put to use at Weathersfield, Vermont. 'Although it has been variously metamorphosed in

¹ The preface to this book stated 'that there is no treatise extant adapted to the genius and circumstances of the times, and fitted to young and vulgar capacities'. Rugg, op. cit., p. [13], cites an article by Rev. Henry A. Hazen in the *Dartmouth* for 11 November 1877, on Curtis's *Compend*.

² Thomas, vol. 1, p. 52, says that Green had two presses, one being the Harvard College press (the original Day press) and the other being the press supplied by the Corporation in England for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Indians. According to Thomas, vol. 1, p. 62, 'the printing materials were removed from Cambridge and probably sold' after the death of Samuel Green in 1702.

³ Wyman Spooner's account of the press is reprinted in Hawkins's article, pp. 34-5. See also Hawkins, pp. 136-9. The Spooners, Alden and Judah Padock, were brothers-in-law of Timothy Green III, of New London and Norwich, great-grandson of the first Samuel Green of Cambridge.

'the repairs it has necessarily undergone,' Wyman Spooner wrote, 'we believe the principal original pieces still remain. 'The cheeks or posts are of the white oak of Old England, 'and received a polish a little inferior to mahogany.' Whatever the origin of the venerable Spooner press, it is now preserved in the building of the Vermont Historical Society at Montpelier.

On 27 October 1779 the Vermont Council requested Mr. Amos Robinson 'to call on the Printers of this state and desire 'him [*sic*] to complete the Pamphlets Intituled a Vindication 'by Ethan Allen, and that said Mr. Robinson see them Transmitted to the Governor at Arlington without delay'.¹ The 172-page *Vindication* was probably the last work of the Spooner press at Dresden, for on the same day that the council requested completion of Allen's pamphlet, the general assembly of Vermont decided that the official press must be erected within the limits of that state.

After the cessation of the Spooner press at Dresden in the fall of 1779, Daniel Fowle, at Portsmouth, had a monopoly of printing in New Hampshire for nearly five years. The *New-Hampshire Gazette* by the summer of that year had absorbed its Exeter subsidiary and after the cessation of the *Dresden Mercury* in August remained the only newspaper in the state. The first intruders upon this state of affairs were John Melcher and George Jerry Osborne, Jr., who established the *Exeter Chronicle* on 10 June 1784. This paper probably ceased with the issue of 3 December, which is the last issue extant. Immediately thereafter, on 24 December, Melcher and Osborne began printing the *New-Hampshire Gazette* at Portsmouth for the aging Daniel Fowle. In January 1786 Osborne withdrew, and Melcher continued printing the *Gazette* alone, succeeding to its ownership on the death of Daniel Fowle in June 1787. In February 1802 Melcher sold the paper to Nathaniel S. and

¹ Rugg, op. cit., p. 9.

Washington Peirce. Both Melcher and Osborne had been apprentices under Daniel Fowle at Portsmouth.¹

On the very day that Melcher and Osborne began to print the *New-Hampshire Gazette* for Daniel Fowle, Robert Gerrish issued the first number of his *New-Hampshire Mercury* at Portsmouth. This paper lasted until March 1788, and no more is heard of Gerrish. A much more important figure in New Hampshire printing had meanwhile appeared at Exeter when John Lamson and Henry Ranlet established the *Freeman's Oracle* there on 1 July 1786. Ranlet left the firm in August 1789, and forthwith established an opposition paper, the *New Hampshire Gazette*. Lamson continued the *Freeman's Oracle* for about four months and then it died.² Ranlet's *Gazetteer* became the *Herald of Liberty* in February 1793, and in January 1794 was transferred to William Stearns and Samuel Winslow, who kept it alive until the summer of 1796. But Ranlet was not yet through with publishing. In September 1796 he started at Exeter the *New-Hampshire Spy* (the second newspaper of that name). This lasted only six months. He tried again in December 1798, with *Ranlet's Federal Miscellany*, later renamed *Exeter Federal Miscellany*. This perished in October 1799—perhaps under the weight of the extraordinary title

¹ These two printers are not mentioned in Thomas's *History of Printing in America* which, generally speaking, stopped with the year 1776. Not long after leaving the partnership with Melcher, Osborne began the *New-Hampshire Spy* at Portsmouth in October 1786. This was a semi-weekly, with consecutively numbered pages. In November 1791 John Osborne became a partner and in May 1792 George Osborne withdrew. The *Spy* came to an end in March 1793. Late in August 1799, George Osborne started the *Republican Ledger* at Portsmouth. He died in June 1800, and Samuel Nutting with John Whitelock continued the *Ledger* until its decease at the end of 1803. Melcher, after selling the *New-Hampshire Gazette*, continued to print at Portsmouth until about 1804.

² A letter from E. T. Andrews, preserved in the Thomas papers in the American Antiquarian Society, informs Isaiah Thomas under date of 20 September 1791: 'Lamson, now working with Melcher at Portsmouth, has applied for work, and shall I believe engage him—he will be ready to come first of next month.'

which Ranlet finally gave it, the *Political Banquet and Farmer's Feast*. During the fourteen years of Ranlet's activity at Exeter, many a book and pamphlet appeared from his press, in addition to his newspapers, up to about 1800.

In May 1795, John Lamson started *Lamson's Weekly Visitor* at Exeter, competing with the *Herald of Liberty* until the death of the *Visitor* at the end of December. In 1798 a John Lamson was printing at Charleston, South Carolina.

Keene, in the south-western corner of the state, became the fifth printing point in New Hampshire in August 1787, when James Davenport Griffith began to publish the *New-Hampshire Recorder* there. Griffith had bought the *Boston Continental Journal* from John Gill in 1785, but two years later had discontinued it because of the state tax on advertisements. At Keene, Griffith experienced the usual difficulties of the pioneer printer; for four months in the winter of 1789-90 he had to suspend publication because he could procure no paper. The first Keene newspaper came to an end in March 1791. Griffith started another, the *Cheshire Advertiser*, in January 1792, but it did not live out the year.

Probably the first product of the Keene press, other than the newspaper, was *An Oration, Delivered at the request of the Inhabitants of Keene, June 30, 1788*, by Aaron Hall, 'Member of the Late State Convention'. This oration was 'To Celebrate the Ratification of the Federal Constitution by the State of New-Hampshire', and was issued with the imprint: 'Keene: State of New-Hampshire: Printed by James D. Griffith. M,DCC,LXXXVIII'.

The sixth location of the press in New Hampshire was Concord, now the capital. Here George Hough arrived on 16 August 1789, and set up his press on 8 September of that year. His first printing at Concord was *A Sermon, Delivered July 1, 1789, at the Installation of The Reverend Israel Evans, to the Pastoral Care of the Church in Concord, New Hampshire*, 'By

A N
ORATION,
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 INHABITANTS OF KEENE,
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 OF THE
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 BY THE
 STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.



BY AARON HALL, M. A.
 MEMBER OF THE LATE STATE CONVENTION.



KEENE: State of New-Hampshire :
 PRINTED BY JAMES D. GRIFFITH.

M,DCC,LXXXVIII.

4. The first book printed in Keene, New Hampshire.

Joseph Eckley, A.M. Pastor of the Old South Church in Boston'. It appeared with the imprint 'Printed at Concord, By George Hough, 1789'. Not long after this, Hough printed Robert Dodsley's *Christian Economy*, issued in the fall of 1789.¹ On 6 January 1790 he began to publish the *Concord Herald and Newhampshire Intelligencer*.

Born in Connecticut in 1757 and trained as a printer in the office of the *Norwich Packet* under John Trumbull, George Hough had first gone to Vermont, where he was the partner of Alden Spooner in the *Vermont Journal* at Windsor from the summer of 1783 until the end of 1788. At Concord, he was appointed postmaster and opened the first post office there in 1791. He took Elijah Russell into partnership for a few months in 1792, but for the rest of the time conducted the business alone. Under the title *Courier of New Hampshire*, assumed early in 1794, he conducted the first Concord newspaper until 30 October 1805 when it succumbed.²

Also in 1790, the press came for the first time to Dover, when Eliphalet Ladd, on 15 July, began his *Political and Sentimental Repository, or Strafford Recorder*. Possibly because he found little or no sentiment in the newspaper business, Ladd dropped the adjective 'sentimental' from the title before his paper was a year old. His printing office was burned in January 1792, and when his paper emerged again a few weeks after the fire, it was appropriately renamed the *Phenix*. As the *Phenix*, Ladd con-

¹ Jacob B. Moore, 'History of Newspapers Published in New Hampshire from 1776 to 1840', *American Quarterly Register*, vol. 13, November 1840, pp. 170-81, at p. 171.

² Nearly fourteen years later, in January 1819, Hough began the *Concord Observer*, a religious paper, which he carried on until April 1822, when he sold it. His last publishing venture was the *Concord Register*, begun in 1824. He died at Concord on 8 February 1830, at the age of 73 (John W. Moore, pp. 104-6). Moore describes this printer, affectionately known as 'Pa Hough', as 'so very precise that it was said he seemed to put a comma after every step he took'.

tinued the paper until March 1794, when Samuel Bragg, Jr., his brother-in-law, succeeded him as publisher.¹

Before the end of the century, printing had been brought to four other New Hampshire towns—Walpole, Amherst, Haverhill, and Gilmanton. At Walpole, Isaiah Thomas was the guiding power behind the press, in absentee partnership with David Carlisle, Jr., the firm establishing the *New Hampshire Journal: Or, The Farmer's Weekly Museum* on 11 April 1793. This paper, the title of which became *Farmer's Weekly Museum: Newhampshire and Vermont Journal* after four years, enjoyed a brilliant career until 1810, deriving its fame chiefly from the writings of Joseph Dennie, 'The elegant essayist of the old American newspapers',² who was a contributor and for some years its editor.

¹ Ladd and his father-in-law, Samuel Bragg, Sr., were engaged in a publishing venture at Haverhill, Massachusetts, where they started the *Guardian of Freedom* in September 1793. Bragg withdrew the following April, and at the end of May, Ladd sold the Haverhill paper to Samuel Aiken. At about the time the Haverhill paper was started, George S. Homans became Ladd's partner in the *Phenix* at Dover.

² John W. Moore, p. 469, *Moore's Historical, Biographical, and Miscellaneous Gatherings*, in the form of disconnected notes relative to printers, printing, publishing, and editing of books . . . 1420 to 1886. Concord, 1886. This book contains many interesting personal anecdotes about the early printers of New Hampshire and elsewhere.

Thomas, vol. 1, p. 122, records that Dennie 'was reckoned among the first scholars in the belle-lettres, which our country has produced'. This distinguished editor was a grandson of Bartholomew Green, Jr., of Boston. He left Walpole in 1799 to continue his career at Philadelphia, where he died in 1812, at the early age of 44.